of the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972. These are as follows:—

Rule 26(4)

The appointing authority may permit a person to withdraw his resignation in the public interest on the following conditions, namely:—

(i) that the resignation was tendered by the Government servant for some compelling reasons which did not involve any reflection on his integrity, efficiency or conduct and the request for withdrawal of the resignation has been made as a result of a material change in the circumstances which originally compelled him to tender the resignation;

(ii) that during the period intervening between the date on which the resignation became effective and the date from which the request for withdrawal was made, the conduct of the person concerned was in no way improper;

(iii) that the period of absence from duty between the date on which the resignation became effective and the date on which the person is allowed to resume duty as a result of permission, to withdraw the resignation is not more than ninety days;

(iv) that the post, which was vacated by the Government servant on the acceptance of his resignation or any other comparable post, is available.

Rule 26(5)

Request for withdrawal of a resignation shall not be accepted by the appointing authority where a Government servant resigns his service or post with a view to taking up an appointment in or under a private commercial company or in or under a corporation or company wholly or substantially owned or controlled by the Government or in or under a body controlled or financed by the Government.

(c) and (d) During the last one year, one such case of an ex-employee of the Andaman & Nicobar Administration was received by the Ministry of Home Affairs who, after consultation with the Department of Personnel & Training, decided on the merits of the case to reject the request made by the said ex-employee for withdrawal of his resignation.

NASA's Space Observatory

*345. SHRI RAJUBHAIA A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report in the Indian Express of December 23, 1998, that the US Government propose to name NASA's new $1.3 billion space observatory with a new orbiting telescope to be launched in April, 1999 after the Indian Nobel laureate, the late Dr. Subramaniyam Chandrasekhar; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to confer any posthumous award to this great Indian Scientist, if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Presently there is no proposal to confer any posthumous award to Dr. Subramaniyam Chandrasekhar. However, he was conferred Padma Vibhushan in 1968.

Bumper Foodgrains Harvest

*346. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHWAN:
SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a bumper foodgrains harvest during the current year is anticipated by Government;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what will be the anticipated reduction in imports and growth in the exports as a result thereof; and

(d) what is the anticipated post market prices of foodgrains and the steps contemplated by Government to protect the interests of the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The production of foodgrains during the current year is estimated to be an all time record of 200.88 million tonnes. The crop-wise details are as under:—

Crop	Production (million tonnes)
Rice	84.48
Wheat	70.63
Coarse Cereal	30.58
Pulses	15.19
TOTAL:	200.88

(a) As a result of a bumber harvest, no import of foodgrains is anticipated except for pulses. On the other hand, there may be exports of higher quantities of rice and wheat products that would depend on international market conditions.

(b) The prices of foodgrains are expected to rule modest in the post-harvest period. In order to protect the interest of farmers, the Government has taken measures to procure foodgrains at minimum support prices (MSP) to prevent prices from falling below MSP.

Sub-Groups of Task Force on Infrastructure

*347. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) how many sub-groups have been constituted under the task force on infrastructure; and

(b) what are the details of recommendations, if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) There are no standing sub-groups of the Task Force on Infrastructure. However, during the course of the seven meetings of the Task Force on Infrastructure held till date, Working Groups have been formed to address specific issues.

The following are the details of sub-groups formed.

(i) *Sub-Group on Alternative Financing of National Highway Development Project (NHDP)*

This group was headed by Finance Secretary and had Chairman, Infrastructure Development Finance Company (IDFC) and Member Secretary, Task Force as other members. Their mandate was to develop alternative and innovative means of ensuring availability of funds.

The Sub-Group presented a Report to the Task Force on the National Highway Development Project and suggested alternative ways of involving the private sector in executing, financing and funding the project, which included the imposition of a fuel cess and the creation of a dedicated fund.

(ii) *Sub-Group on Civil Aviation*

This Sub-Group had among others Secretary (Civil Aviation), Secretary to PM and Managing Director, Mahindra Ford. This Sub-Group was constituted in order to look into various aspects of a comprehensive airport policy such as changes required in the existing law and removal of obstacles for establishing world class international airports in which 100% foreign equity can be permissible.